

Kazak

*563 The Kazakhs are

361 pastoral nomads, herding sheep, goats, horned cattle,
231 horses, and camels. Felt hats are used in the summer, but
221 most Kazakhs live in mud huts in the winter or, in mountain
[436] country, in log cabins. Sheep and goats are the economic staple
[262] and serve as the units of exchange value. Poorer people live more
[291] on milk and cheese than on mutton; wealthier herd-owners eat
more mutton. Sheepskins, tanned with the wool on them, are used
for clothing; cotton textiles, used for lighter clothing or as a fac-
ing for the skin clothing, are acquired in trade. Felted wool is
• [825] used to cover the round, conical-roofed tents. The horse, formerly
[276] important in war, is honored in Kazakh folklore for its beauty,
bravery, and faithfulness. In modern times the wealthy keep herds
of mares in order to be able to drink *kumis*, made by fermenting
mare's milk.

*563 Like all pastoral nomads of Inner Asia, the Kazakhs have al-
361 ways had some acquaintance with agriculture. Rich men some-
463 times hire Uighurs or Chinese to cultivate grain for them on suit-
221 able land; on the other hand, poor Kazakhs, whose herds are not
241 large enough to sustain them, turn their herds over during the
summer to richer clan relatives and work at cutting and storing
hay or at cultivating grain or potatoes.

*563 Like other nomads, also, the Kazakhs do not wander planlessly.
221 Summer pastures belong collectively to a group of families form-
[618] ing a clan, identified by a common ancestor (real or fictitious);
361 these pastures lie within a larger territory in which jurisdiction
[592] is claimed by the larger unit, the tribe. Winter quarters more
commonly belong to a single family, often the "large family" of
several generations living together. The chief migrations are in
spring, from winter quarters to summer pastures, and in autumn,
from summer pastures back to winter quarters. The most hazard-
ous migration is in spring, when herds are weak after the winter,
when lambs are being born, and when spring blizzards may cause
heavy losses.

Good winter quarters are much harder to find than good sum-
mer pastures; shelter and food must be in close combination.
Hence the scarcity of suitable winter quarters rather than the
amplitude of summer pastures determines the total population
capacity of a nomad territory. In practice the wealthy families

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at all, as a mountainous frontier province of "England," inhabited entirely by turban-heads (Chan-t'ou) over whom ruled a white race only slightly less barbarous than themselves. I remember once being told by an inspecting officer from Urumchi who called on me about the road across the Gobi Desert to China Proper: "It is not so dangerous as it used to be," he said, perfectly seriously. "The route the caravans used to go by between Hami and Tunhwang became infested by stone dragons, which breathed fire and storm and devoured many travellers. They got so bad, that the government sent out a detachment of troops against them. But the stone dragons devoured the troops too. So the route had to be declared closed and now travellers go by a longer one where there are no stone dragons." Another Magistrate with whom I was talking about the elusive "cloudy tiger" of the Tarim River jungles was very contemptuous about this animal, which he admitted he had never seen. "It is like the Turban-head, mild and cowardly," he said. "The real Chinese tiger is a very different animal. It is twice as big as the Maralbashi tiger, and it bears on its forehead the royal symbol, Wang. Wherever it goes, a strong wind follows it. Thus is it recognized."¹

Every now and again some sight or incident would bring forcibly home to me the Arcadian isolation in which the people of the country lived. One day while walking near the Aqsu Gate I came upon a small crowd lining the bank above one of the few short pieces of level road near the city. Wondering what they were looking at, I joined them and saw—a young man vigorously pedalling a bicycle up and down. The crowd gazed in awed silence. I got into conversation with a man who told me that this "velocipede" was the only one in Kashgar and that its owner occasionally gave exhibitions. He did not think that anyone else in Kashgar knew how to ride a velocipede.

¹ So tall were some of the yarns with which I was solemnly regaled by dear old mandarins, that had it not been for the fact that they obviously believed every word they said I would have taken it for granted that they were trying to pull my leg. One, who evidently thought I had never seen a yak, told me some remarkable facts about that animal. He said that a yak will dig his horn into the mountain-side and thus swing his body across a steep face, using his horn as a pivot. More wonderful still, when a loaded yak comes to a corner in a narrow cliff-path where a rock juts out and prevents his getting his load round in the ordinary way, he turns inward, facing the cliff, and *sidles* round the corner with his hind legs over the edge!

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It is a great place

172 for the treasure-seekers, known as "Taklamakanchis," who are to be found all along the fringe of the great desert; ragged, ever-hopeful men of the tramp type who spend their lives ransacking the remains of ancient Buddhist tombs and temples far out among the sands of the Takla Makan. Occasionally these men find a few coins or seals or flakes of gold-leaf used in decoration; but I never heard of any one of them becoming rich in the process. From the archaeological point of view, the activities of the ubiquitous Taklamakanchis cut both ways; Stein acknowledges many debts to them, including assistance, direct or indirect, in the discovery of his chief sites; but he had far oftener to deplore the damage done by them to tombs and temples, stupas and dwelling-houses.

Zawa, 23rd November, 1922.

134 We are no longer in "Kashgaria" now; we are in the ancient land of Khotan, the "Kingdom of Jade." There is a distinct edge-of-the-desert feel about the countryside, fertile and closely-cultivated though it is. You notice it first when you come to Goma after the long desert stretch from Karghalik. You are getting further east; the great Takla Makan on your left hand is nearly at its broadest; the Kunlun on your right is an arid range. Now and again, quite unexpectedly, you come upon a belt of desert or a village islanded in sand; for here, as in Kansu far to the east, the inexorable "Gobi"—the word means merely "desert"—is encroaching from the north-west, pushing the thin line of cultivation back against the fifteen-hundred mile-long wall of Tibet. One whole village we passed was in its death-throes; a spear-head of dunes from the north had pinned it against the barren foothills, and all the houses had been abandoned except two or three to which the owners still clung pathetically though the sand was heaped right up to the roof. The loess soil in these parts, though apparently no less prolific when watered, is lighter both in weight and in colour than the yellow loess of Kashgar. The climate is evidently warmer, as one would expect, for the houses of the poor are all of wattles plastered with mud, unlike the solid mud-brick structures of the Kashgar oasis. The people too are more vivacious and excitable, as befits the south; one notices it at once in the small boys, whose enterprise and cheekiness in pursuit of a *tamasha* (e.g. a foreign traveller and his wife) has to be seen to be believed. The inhabitants of the southern oases are great pigeon-lovers. Outside every farm-house you will see tall poles with cross-poles at the top and rows of fat pigeons roosting on them at sunset. If you sprinkle grain on the sand at the *Kaptar Mazar* or Pigeon Shrine of Qum-rabat Padshahim (literally, My King's Castle in the Sand) in the desert between Goma and Khotan, thousands of pigeons will stream out to meet you, a sort of Milky Way of pigeons, and the sound of their cooing and of their myriad wings is like the sea.

Khotan, 24th November, 1922.

000 This afternoon, eight miles from Khotan, we stopped at an ornate building opening off the bazaar of a small town. The masons were still at work and a stone-carver was chiselling away at a lengthy inscription in Turki on the outer face of the gateway. The legend

¹[i.e., Goma on the Takla Makan-Analyst]

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The snakes found in the Kashgar oasis are not poisonous, but the people have a certain superstitious dread of them for which it is difficult to account. It is said that if you kill a snake, its mate will follow you about everywhere—haunt you, in fact, like an Indian "sending." As in most Oriental countries, rumours of human sacrifice obtain currency whenever any great building work is commenced. When Major Dockray erected the masts of his wireless station, five miles north of Kashgar, the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages spread it abroad that he had kidnapped forty Turki children and had buried them underneath the masts. He supposed that it was the "Hidden Hand" trying to wreck the scheme, but it was not; it was a very ancient and deeply-rooted superstition. At Kashgar it is believed that the great mud wall of the city contains the bodies of the slaves who died under the overseers' whips while engaged in building it; as they fell, it is said, their bodies were built into the wall. This is obviously a variant of the human sacrifice legend, and probably represents a race-memory of horrors that used to take place in forgotten ages.¹

Since the earliest times the Takla Makan Desert has been the subject of much superstition and legendary lore. The people who live on its verge all believe that great and wealthy cities lie buried beneath its sands, and that it is haunted by demons and the ghosts of the cities' former inhabitants. These are much feared by the "Taklamakanchis" or treasure-seekers who year after year risk and sometimes lose their lives in desert expeditions in search of buried treasure. A remarkable example of the antiquity of the Takla Makan legends is given by Sir A. Stein in *Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan*.² While on his way to the Uzun-Tati site north of Domoko on the Khotan-Keriya road, he heard from some villagers a legend of the Sodom and Gomorrah type about the city which had once existed at Uzun Tati. Its inhabitants, they said, mocked at a holy man who had rebuked them for their sins, whereupon as a punishment God had rained sand upon the

¹ When the Grandpass Victoria Bridge was commenced at Colombo, it was firmly believed that two children had been sacrificed to the god of the Kelani River. As recently as the summer of 1924 serious riots, in which six Sikh taxi-drivers were killed, took place at Calcutta as the result of a rumour that certain Sikh workmen engaged in the construction of a dock were kidnapping and sacrificing Muhammadan children.

² Pp. 430, 438-9.

/The New Uighurs/

563 mutual courtesy. In addressing one another they use the polite
576 form of you. The same politeness is demonstrated between wife
and husband. Parents use the equivalent of "thou" to address
their children, servants or workers. Upon meeting a friend or
entering a friend's house they say "As-salam Alaikum," and the
reply is "Alaikum as-salam." They inquire about the health of
the family, then bow and shake hands. Only women kiss when
they meet, and only if they are related. When they part they say
"Khosh," or "Allah Akbar," meaning, "The Lord is great."

563 The more religious women pray before eating or starting to
576 do something. Washing the hands before and after meals is man-
574 datory. Bowls of water and towels are provided at a feast or
264 banquet table, and hands are washed between courses. When a
782 hostess serves refreshments to a guest, the guest rises, bows
and says "Ishqallah," meaning thank you. Polite speeches are
made by both host and guest on the guest's arrival and depar-
ture. Good manners are regarded as important.

4. Superstitions and taboos

563 The New Uighurs attach superstition to almost everything.
771 They believe in witches, ghosts, charms and talismans. As
mentioned before, they believe in the powers of local saints and
776 heroes, to whom they have dedicated innumerable shrines, and
778 certain superstitions connect these shrines with the curing of
disease and the bearing of children. Ancestor worship is also
769 strong among them, as shown by the popular names of the
shrines.

756 The people are also firm believers in witch-doctors, and in
755 magic powers that cure disease, induce love, or sow enmity
778 between people. Ghosts are much feared, especially the ghost of
a Chinese. People regard the Urumchi Road from Kashgar as a
563 haunt for Chinese ghosts. They believe that if one is haunted he
771 may be able to propitiate the ghosts by leaving money on his
775 doorstep overnight. If the money is gone in the morning, the
782 ghosts have taken it and will make no further trouble. They also
825 have a superstitious dread of snakes, and believe that if one
kills a snake, its mate will haunt him.

563 The New Uighurs try to maintain an everlasting fire in their
372 fireplaces, to bring prosperity to the house. Ashes from the
fireplace are carried out at night or before sunrise, for to clean
777 the fireplace and take out the ashes during the day may bring
misfortune to the household. They fear thunder, and during a
563 thunderstorm they pray for deliverance from threatening danger.
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5. Religious celebrations and festivals

563 Like the festivals of Moslems the world over, the festivals of
796 the New Uighurs are deeply colored with religious influence.
Besides Fridays, which are generally celebrated, the people
have only three main holidays, Rōse-hāyt, Kurban-hāyt and